



Norway: Migration and Immigration

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As we look back in time we see that most Norwegians stayed close to home. When they did move it was usually to a parish close by, or to a neighboring “clerical district”. There are many reasons people moved, but the most common reason was that of occupational training (an apprentice moving around with a “master craftsman” to learn a craft), work (moving around to where work could be found), marriage (wife often moved to husbands parish), or old age (parents moving to live with a child).

Moving patterns:

- As the local population increased we see people moving *from* the countryside *to* the cities.
- People usually moved *from* inland *to* the coastal areas.
- Most people moved *after* the spring planting (April/ May) and *after* the harvest (October/November).
- If they were looking *for* work they would be moving before planting and harvest started in order to be situated when these important happenings got going!

There have never been big groups of “common people” immigrating to Norway from any European country, but at times a slow influx of people from the neighboring countries (Sweden, Finland and Denmark) as well as Germans (The medieval merchant guild called the Hanseatic League was started by Germans), and Dutchmen can be found arriving. There were a few Brits as well.

During various time periods many craftsmen and specialists arrived in Norway (merchants, glassworkers, and miners) to pursue their craft or share their knowledge with the Norwegians people.

Through-out history the Sami people have notably been a migrant people who crossed the borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia on a regular bases. They drove their huge herds of reindeer from one grazing area to another. Some still do that today, while others have migrated from the northern parts of Norway to other parts through-out the country, and have been assimilated into the rest of the Norwegian population.

What types of moving records are there?

Moving in and out records: These records were supposed to start in 1812, but many did not start until 1814. They are considered the least accurate of the record types the priests kept, and can be found in the local parish registers.

This records could include the following:

- Name of persons in the family, including children
- Ages or exact birth dates and years
- Local residence
- Marriage status
- Where they are going to and when
- When they arrived and from where
- Reason for moving
- Occupations

Moving certificates/Attester:

“Presteattester” or “flytteattester” (moving certificates): Up to 1860 Norwegians had to carry “ID” when travelling in Norway.

The local parish priest would fill out a moving certificate which the people would carry with them when moving from place to place. This was presented to the priest in the new area.

Information found in the certificates could include the following:

- Name of the person travelling
- Age
- Destination
- Marriage status
- Occupation
- Free from military
- Vaccination information
- Communion information
- Confirmation

Politiets flytteprotokoller (moving documents in the police archives): After 1900 the police took over the record keeping of persons moving in and out of parishes. These were kept till about 1942-43, and can be found in “Statsarkivenes politi-og lensmannsarkiver”.

These are some of the different kinds of “protokoller”:

- Passport / Reisepass
- Pass protokoll
- Politiets fremmedprotokoller
- Centralpasskontoret
- Statsborgersakene: started around 1880—regarding citizenships
- Extraskatten’s av- og tilgangslister 1762

There can be clues regarding former residences in the parish registers:

- Christening and marriage records; i.e. where are the godparents and/or sponsors from?

- Confirmation records can give place of residence and information of birth.
- Kommunikant bøker (communion books): People partook of communion twice a year, the records can be helpful to pin down a time period of possible move.
- Probates: where are the heirs living?

Sources for immigration and emigration:

Emigrantprotokoller (www.digitalarkivet.no)

Finnemantallet 1686: People of Finnish descent having come via Sweden; is not complete. Book: FHL 948.1 X2

Other: Akershus stiftamtsarkiv: Swedes moving in to Østlandet 1710-1794 (can be found in the “Statsarkivet”)

Østfold historielag: innflytta svensker til Østfold 1812-1920 (Swedes moving to Østfold County): <http://digitalarkivet.arkivverket.no/gen/sok/2/100653>

Amerikabrev (letters from America):

<http://www.hist.uib.no/digitalskolen/oe/Amerikabrev.htm>

Norsk Utvandermuseum (Hamar): www.emigrantmuseum.no

For additional information on immigration and emigration see articles on FamilySearch.org Wiki page for Norway

- https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway_Emigration_and_Immigration
- https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway_Emigration_and_Immigration#Records_of_Norwegian_Immigrants_in_the_Other_Countries

Searchable databases for emigration and immigration (very limited for immigration to Norway)

- www.digitalarkivet.no
- www.norwegianheritage.com